



President Joe Biden talks to reporters before boarding Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House, Wednesday, Oct. 12, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

## Biden hit on economy as more say finances poor: AP-NORC poll

By JOSH BOAK and  
EMILY SWANSON  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — More U.S. adults are now feeling financially vulnerable amid high inflation — a political risk for President Joe Biden and his fellow Democrats one month before the mid-term elections.

Some 46% of people now call their personal financial situation poor, up from 37% in March, according to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. That's a notable downturn at a particularly inopportune moment for Biden, given that the share of Americans who felt positive about

their finances had stayed rock steady over the last few years — even during the economic turmoil of the COVID-19 pandemic. And while a majority of Americans see high prices as beyond Biden's control, they continue to disapprove of his handling of the economy overall.

Overall, 54% say their finances are good in the latest survey. That figure was at least 62% through the global recession caused by the pandemic in 2020, and even in late 2021 and early 2022 as prices began to rise across the country. But inflation's prolonged bite has left the U.S. and wider world facing the possibility

of a downturn and, despite solid job growth, more consumers are feeling the pain. In Salado, Texas, Bethany Saunders saw the rate she paid for electricity double in August, and her water bill jumped as well as she dealt with a summer heat and drought. Her utilities bills totaled \$800, a shock to the 43-year-old, who had carefully budgeted after going without a pay raise for two years. "That just drained my bank account — I'm not rich, but I knew what I could live on," said Saunders, who voted Republican in 2020 and plans to do so again this year.

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## Government of Aruba advised not to reopen the border while still at the negotiating table



## Minister of Finance attended IMF meeting with Caribbean Countries



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# Biden hit on economy as more say finances poor: AP-NORC poll

Continued from Front

Overall, views of Biden and of the direction of the country held steady in October, after improving somewhat in September. Forty-three percent say they approve of how Biden is handling his job as president, while 25% say the country is headed in the right direction. Biden's approval rating had dropped as low as 36% in a July AP-NORC poll, and the percentage saying the country is headed in the right direction dropped as low as 14% in June.

The president has been steadfast in saying he believes the economy can escape a recession, and he said in an interview broadcast Tuesday by CNN that any potential downturn would be modest.

"I don't think there will be a recession," Biden told CNN's Jake Tapper. "If it is, it'll be a very slight recession. That is, we'll move down slightly."

Saunders doesn't think Biden is entirely to blame for her higher bills, but she said his \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package from last year with its direct payments to Americans was excessive. Some leading economists say the money helped ignite inflation that reached a 40-year peak in June. The government will release an inflation report



A customer looks at refrigerated items at a Grocery Outlet store in Pleasanton, Calif., Sept. 15, 2022.

Associated Press

on Thursday, and economists expect it to show that prices rose 8.1% in September from a year ago.

"I see him throwing money at things we don't need," Saunders said of Biden. "It makes me think of the Oprah episode that became famous. 'You get a car, you get a car, you get a car.'" The drop in financial well-being was especially acute among Americans in households making less than \$50,000 a year, just 33% of whom now call their personal finances good compared with 50% in March. Sixty-one percent of those in household mak-

ing between \$50,000 and \$100,000 call their personal finances good, as do 75% of those making more than that — both down only slightly since earlier in the year. In the latest poll, 23% call the national economy good. That's similar to the percentage in June but down slightly from 29% in September, when views of the national economy had shown signs of improvement. The drop since September came primarily among Democrats, from 46% then to 35% now. In September, Democrats had appeared increasingly optimistic about the econ-

omy compared with earlier in the summer.

Sandra Baker, 56, said she voted for Biden and intends to support Democrats in this year's elections. The Lincoln, Nebraska resident said the president is trying his best to fix the economy and address political divides.

"He's doing all he can do, but everything else is so screwed up it doesn't really matter," Baker said. "The general vibe — everything the Democrats do — seems to be toward helping the little man and it's always been like that."

But the economy has

proved a challenge — with gasoline costs becoming a renewed source of financial pressure. The average price at the pump was \$3.92 a gallon on Wednesday, up roughly 5.5% from a month ago, according to AAA. Support for Biden had picked up after a 99-day drop in gas prices from a June high that ended in September.

Views of Biden's handling of the economy remain underwater. Only 36% say they approve and 63% disapprove. But Americans aren't heaping all the blame for inflation at Biden's feet: 55% say higher than usual prices are mostly because of factors outside Biden's control, while 44% say that's happening mostly because of Biden's policies. The president has blamed rising energy and food prices on Russia's February invasion of Ukraine. He's also blasted oil companies and refineries for raking in profits off the higher prices, instead of doing more to increase production. Saudi Arabia and other countries tied to OPEC dealt the U.S. a further blow last week by announcing plans to cut oil production by 2 million barrels a day in response to the slowing economy, a move that the administration said would support oil exporters such as Russia. □

## Fed voiced determination at last meeting to curb inflation



Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell speaks during a conversation with leaders from organizations that include nonprofits, small businesses, manufacturing, supply chain management, the hospitality industry, and the housing and education sectors at the Federal Reserve building, Friday, Sept. 23, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

AP Economics Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Federal Reserve officials at their last meeting stressed their commitment to taming "unacceptably high" inflation before announcing that they were raising their benchmark interest rate by a substantial three-quarters of a point for a third straight time and signaling more large rate hikes ahead.

In minutes from their Sept. 20-21 meeting released Wednesday, the Fed policymakers judged that a "softening of the labor market" — likely including higher unemployment — would be needed to curb the nation's intense inflationary

pressures. They noted that hiring remained "robust," which itself fuels high inflation as wages rise sharply. Beginning in March this year, the Fed has raised rates five times in an aggressive pace that has boosted its key short-term rate to a range of 3% to 3.25%, the highest level since 2008. The Fed's benchmark rate, in turn, influences many consumer and business loan rates. The central bank is set to raise rates again at its meetings in November and December, beginning with another large three-quarter-point hike early next month. Chair Jerome Powell has warned that wring-

ing high inflation out of the economy will "bring some pain," with higher unemployment and, many fear, a recession by next year. Even as the Fed's credit tightening has sharply raised borrowing costs across the economy, hiring has remained surprisingly resilient. Unemployment dropped last month to 3.5%, matching a half-century low. And employers added 263,000 jobs in September, down from 315,000 in August but still reflective of a job market that is hot enough to keep putting upward pressure on wages and feed into higher prices. □



# ACT test scores drop to lowest in 30 years in pandemic slide

By **CHEYANNE MUMPHREY**  
AP Education Writer

**PHOENIX (AP)** — Scores on the ACT college admissions test by this year's high school graduates hit their lowest point in more than 30 years the latest evidence of the enormity of learning disruption during the pandemic.

The class of 2022's average ACT composite score was 19.8 out of 36, marking the first time since 1991 that the average score was below 20. What's more, an increasing number of high school students failed to meet any of the subject-area benchmarks set by the ACT showing a decline in preparedness for college-level coursework.

The test scores, made public in a report Wednesday, show 42% of ACT-tested graduates in the class of 2022 met none of the subject benchmarks in English, reading, science and math, which are indicators of how well students are expected to perform in corresponding college courses. In comparison, 38% of test takers in 2021 failed to meet any of the benchmarks.

"Academic preparedness is where we are seeing the decline," said Rose Babington, senior director for state partnerships for the ACT.



New students at Bear River High School, in Grass Valley, Calif., gather to see their school schedules during the first morning of school, Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, for the 2022-2023 school.

Associated Press

"Every time we see ACT test scores, we are talking about skills and standards, and the prediction of students to be successful and to know the really important information to succeed and persist through their first year of college courses."

ACT scores have declined steadily in recent years. Still, "the magnitude of the declines this year is particularly alarming," ACT CEO Janet Godwin said in a statement. "We see rapidly growing numbers of seniors

leaving high school without meeting college-readiness benchmarks in any of the subjects we measure."

The results offer a lens into systemic inequities in education, in place well before the pandemic shuttered schools and colleges temporarily waived testing requirements. For example, students without access to rigorous high school curriculum suffered more setbacks during pandemic disruptions, Babington said. Those students are from rural areas, come from low-

income families and are often students of color.

The number of students taking the ACT has declined 30% since 2018, as graduates increasingly forgo college and some universities no longer require admissions tests. But participation plunged 37% among Black students, with 154,000 taking the test this year.

Standardized tests such as the ACT have faced growing concerns that they're unfair to minority and low-income students, as students with access to

expensive test prep or advanced courses often perform better.

Babington defended the test as a measure of college readiness. "Now more than ever, the last few years have shown us the importance of having high-quality data to help inform how we support students," Babington said.

Test scores now are optional for first-year student admission at many institutions. Some colleges, such as the University of California system, even opt for a test-blind policy, where scores are not considered even if submitted.

But many students still take the tests, hoping to get an edge in admissions by submitting their scores. Tyrone Jordan, a freshman at test-optional Arizona State University, said he took the ACT and the SAT to get ahead of other students and help him receive scholarships.

Jordan, who wants to pursue mechanical engineering, said he thinks his rigorous schedule at Tempe Preparatory Academy prepared him for college, and the standardized tests helped support him and his family financially.

"All the test did for me was give me extra financial money," Jordan said. □

# California delays decision to list Joshua tree as threatened

By **SOPHIE AUSTIN**

Associated Press/Report for America

**SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)** — California again pushed back its decision on whether to list the western Joshua tree as threatened after a unanimous vote Wednesday by the Fish and Game Commission.

The decision to move back the vote until at least February comes months after the commission deadlocked on whether the native desert plant should be protected under the California Endangered Species Act. Since the tree is still under consideration to be listed as threatened, no one can remove it without authori-

zation from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Before the commission's split vote in June, the Department of Fish and Wildlife sent letters to Indigenous tribes with traditional ties to the area where the western Joshua trees live. That outreach resulted in six responses from tribal nations, said Director Chuck Bonham. In August, tribal members talked about the cultural and ecological significance of the tree on a Zoom call with Bonham and others.

"I actually would love more time to keep the conversation alive with the nations themselves," Bonham said.

In 2019, the Center for Biological Diversity petitioned for the tree to be listed as threatened in order to protect it from hotter temperatures, intensifying drought and development threats. Commissioners said they need more time to hear from tribal leaders and to allow tribal governments to consult again before the commission can make a final decision.

Samantha Murray, president of the Fish and Game Commission, said Wednesday she hopes there's a legislative alternative that would offer similar protections for the western Joshua tree to those required under the California Endan-

gered Species Act. "I really hope we're talking

about meaningful protections," Murray said. □



A Joshua tree is silhouetted in front of the Bobcat Fire at sunset Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020, in Juniper Hills, Calif. California again pushed back its decision to list the western Joshua tree as threatened after a unanimous vote Wednesday, Oct. 12, 2022 by the Fish and Game Commission.

Associated Press



# Alex Jones ordered to pay \$965 million for Sandy Hook lies

By **DAVE COLLINS**

**Associated Press**

**WATERBURY, Conn. (AP)** —

The conspiracy theorist Alex Jones should pay \$965 million to people who suffered from his false claim that the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting was a hoax, a jury in Connecticut decided Wednesday.

The verdict is the second big judgment against the Infowars host over his relentless promotion of the lie that the 2012 massacre never happened, and that the grieving families seen in news coverage were actors hired as part of a plot to take away people's guns.

It came in a lawsuit filed by the relatives of five children and three educators killed in the mass shooting, plus an FBI agent who was among the first responders to the scene. A Texas jury in August awarded nearly \$50 million to the parents of another slain child.

Some plaintiffs hugged in the courtroom after the verdict was read. Jones wasn't there, but live video from the court played on a split screen on his Infowars show. "Hey, folks, don't go buying big homes," he said. The trial featured tearful



**Infowars founder Alex Jones appears in court to testify during the Sandy Hook defamation damages trial at Connecticut Superior Court in Waterbury, Conn., on Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

testimony from parents and siblings of the victims, who told about how they were threatened and harassed for years by people who believed the lies told on Jones' show.

Strangers showed up at their homes to record them. People hurled abusive comments on social media. Erica Lafferty, the

daughter of slain Sandy Hook principal Dawn Hochsprung, testified that people mailed rape threats to her house. Mark Barden told of how conspiracy theorists had urinated on the grave of his 7-year-old son, Daniel, and threatened to dig up the coffin.

Testifying during the trial, Jones acknowledged he

had been wrong about Sandy Hook. The shooting was real, he said. But both in the courtroom and on his show, he was defiant.

He called the proceedings a "kangaroo court," mocked the judge, called the plaintiffs' lawyer an ambulance chaser and labeled the case an affront to free speech rights. He

claimed it was a conspiracy by Democrats and the media to silence him and put him out of business.

"I've already said 'I'm sorry' hundreds of times and I'm done saying I'm sorry," he said during his testimony.

Twenty children and six adults died in the shooting on Dec. 14, 2012. The defamation trial was held at a courthouse in Waterbury, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) from Newtown, where the attack took place.

The lawsuit accused Jones and Infowars' parent company, Free Speech Systems, of using the mass killing to build his audience and make millions of dollars. Experts testified that Jones' audience swelled when he made Sandy Hook a topic on the show, as did his revenue from product sales.

In both the Texas lawsuit and the one in Connecticut, judges found the company liable for damages by default after Jones failed to cooperate with court rules on sharing evidence, including failing to turn over records that might have showed whether Infowars had profited from knowingly spreading misinformation about mass killings. □

## Judge: Trump must sit for deposition in defamation lawsuit

By **LARRY NEUMEISTER**

**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Former President Donald Trump will have to answer questions under oath next week in a defamation lawsuit lodged by a writer who says he raped her in the mid-1990s, a judge ruled Wednesday. U.S. District Judge Lewis A. Kaplan rejected a request by Trump's lawyers that the planned testimony be delayed. The deposition is now scheduled for Oct. 19. The decision came in a lawsuit brought by E. Jean Carroll, a longtime advice columnist for Elle magazine, who says Trump raped her in an upscale Manhattan department store's dressing room. Trump has denied it. Carroll is scheduled to be deposed Friday. Trump's lawyer, Alina Habba, said in a statement:

"We look forward to establishing on the record that this case is, and always has been, entirely without merit."

Roberta Kaplan, Carroll's attorney, said she was pleased with the ruling and looked forward to filing the new claims next month

"and moving forward to trial with all dispatch."

Trump's legal team has tried various legal tactics to delay the lawsuit and prevent him from being questioned by Carroll's attorneys, but Judge Kaplan wrote that it was time to move forward, especially

given the "advanced age" of Carroll, 78, and Trump, 76, and perhaps other witnesses.

"The defendant should not be permitted to run the clock out on plaintiff's attempt to gain a remedy for what allegedly was a serious wrong," he wrote.

Carroll's lawsuit claims that Trump damaged her reputation in 2019 when he denied raping her. Trump's legal team has been trying to squash the suit by arguing that the Republican was just doing his job as president when he denied the allegations, including when he dismissed his accuser as "not my type."

That's a key question because if Trump was acting within the scope of his duties as a federal employee, the U.S. government would become the defendant in

the case.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said in a split decision last month that Trump was a federal employee when he commented on Carroll's claims.

But it asked another court in Washington to decide whether Trump's public statements occurred during the scope of his employment.

Kaplan, the judge, said Trump has repeatedly tried to delay the collection of evidence in the lawsuit.

"Given his conduct so far in this case, Mr. Trump's position regarding the burdens of discovery is inexcusable," he wrote. "As this Court previously has observed, Mr. Trump has litigated this case since it began in 2019 with the effect and probably the purpose of delaying it." □



**Columnist E. Jean Carroll leaves federal court, on Feb. 22, 2022, in New York.**

**Associated Press**



## Graft convictions extend Suu Kyi's prison term to 26 years

By GRANT PECK  
Associated Press

**BANGKOK (AP)** — A court in military-ruled Myanmar convicted the country's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi on two more corruption charges Wednesday, with two three-year sentences to be served concurrently, adding to previous convictions that now leave her with a 26-year total prison term, a legal official said.

Suu Kyi, 77, was detained on Feb. 1, 2021, when the military seized power from her elected government. She has denied the allegations against her in this case, in which she was accused of receiving \$550,000 as a bribe from a tycoon convicted of drug trafficking.

Corruption cases comprise the biggest share of the many charges the military has brought against the 1991 Nobel Peace laureate. Suu Kyi has been charged with 12 counts in total under the anti-corruption act, with each count punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a fine. Suu Kyi had already been sentenced to 23 years' imprisonment after being convicted of illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, violating coronavirus restrictions, breaching the country's official secrets act, sedition, election fraud and five corruption charges.

Her supporters and independent analysts say the charges are politically motivated and an attempt to discredit her and legitimize the military's seizure of power while keeping her from taking part in the next election, which the military has promised in 2023.

In recent months, her trials have been held in a purpose-built courtroom in the main prison on the outskirts of the capital, Naypyitaw. She has not been seen or allowed to speak in public since she was arrested. Her lawyers, who had been a source of information on the proceedings, have not been allowed to speak



Myanmar's then leader Aung San Suu Kyi delivers a speech during a meeting on implementation of Myanmar Education Development in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, Jan. 28, 2020.

Associated Press

publicly on her behalf or about her trial since a gag order was placed on them last year.

In the case decided Wednesday, Suu Kyi was accused of receiving a total of \$550,000 in 2019 and 2020 from Maung Weik, with separate payments being treated as two offenses.

Maung Weik, a construction magnate, had a close relationship with the army generals in power during a previous military-run government, and has headed two main companies during three decades in business: Maung Weik & Family Co. Ltd., specializing in the trading of metals and agricultural products, and Sae Paing Development Ltd., a real estate and construction company.

He was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2008 for trafficking drugs but was released in 2014 under a semi-democratic transitional government led by former Gen. Thein Sein.

After his release from prison, Maung Weik returned to doing business with former generals and according to a 2017 report in The Irrawaddy, an online news magazine, became chairman of Mandalay Business Capital City Development,

which was involved in urban development work.

Under Suu Kyi's government, Maung Weik won a major development project that included the construction of houses, restaurants, hospitals, economic zones, a port and hotel zones in Myanmar's central Mandalay region.

He was reportedly interrogated by the army two weeks after its takeover, and shortly after that, in March 2021, military-controlled state television broadcast a video in which he claimed to have given cash payoffs to government ministers to help his businesses. A state-controlled newspaper, the Global New Light of Myanmar, reported in February that Suu Kyi in her position as state counselor — the country's de facto chief executive — received \$550,000 in four installments in 2019-2020 "to facilitate the business activities of a private entrepreneur."

Suu Kyi's close colleague, Zaw Myint Maung, who served as a chief minister in the Mandalay region, was separately accused of receiving more than \$180,000 from Maung Weik and was convicted of corruption in June. Wednesday's verdict sentencing Suu Kyi to

two three-year sentences to be served concurrently was conveyed by a legal official who insisted on anonymity for fear of being punished by the authorities. He added that her lawyers are expected to file an appeal in the coming days.

In separate proceedings, Suu Kyi is still being tried together with the country's former president, Win Myint, on another five corruption charges in connection with permits granted to a Cabinet minister for the rental and purchase of a helicopter.

Suu Kyi has been the face of the opposition to military rule in Myanmar for more than three decades. The previous military government put her under house arrest in 1989, which continued on-and-off for 15 of the next 22 years.

Her National League for Democracy party initially came to power after winning the 2015 general election, ushering in a true civilian government for the first time since a 1962 military coup. However, democratic reforms were small and slow in coming, largely because the military retained substantial power and influence under the terms of a constitution it had enacted in 2008. □

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# U.S. to pull visas of Haitian officials, send assistance

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— The U.S. government will pull visas belonging to current and former Haitian government officials involved with criminal organizations as well as provide security and humanitarian assistance to Haiti, senior U.S. officials said Wednesday.

The officials spoke to reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity as a U.S. delegation was arriving in the Caribbean country that has been paralyzed by gangs and antigovernment protests and is facing severe shortages of water, fuel and other basic supplies. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement Wednesday that the U.S. will increase "security assistance" to Haiti's National Police "to strengthen their capacity to counter gangs and re-establish a stable security environment."

The U.S. officials who briefed reporters declined to name which Haitian officials would see their visas revoked or how many would be affected, adding only that the measure also applies to their immediate family members.

The U.S. officials also said



Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry speaks during an interview with the Associated Press at his private residence in Port-au-Prince, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021.

Associated Press

the government is working with Mexico on a U.N. resolution proposing specific sanctions and additional measures to address the many challenges Haiti faces.

The officials declined to say how the upcoming aid would be distributed, although they noted that the U.S. Coast Guard will deploy a major cutter at the request of local officials. They also declined to say when, how and what kind of security and humanitarian assistance will be de-

ployed, adding only that supplies such as bleach, water jugs and oral rehydration salts will be distributed amid the cholera outbreak. As of Sunday, authorities in Haiti had reported 18 deaths and more than 260 suspected cases of cholera in Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas.

"Cholera has arrived amid serious ongoing social and political unrest," said Dr. Carissa Etienne, director of the Pan American Health Organization, adding that the situation complicates

"efforts to provide humanitarian assistance and to respond the outbreak."

Etienne warned on Wednesday that cases are likely significantly higher than what's being reported because they are concentrated in areas affected by escalating street violence and gang activity.

U.S. Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Brian Nichols flew to Haiti Wednesday and was scheduled to meet with politicians and civil society leaders, including Prime

Minister Ariel Henry and a prominent group that has pushed to lead a two-year transitional government and rejected Henry's petition for foreign troops.

Nichols was accompanied by the military deputy commander of the Defense Department's Southern Command, White House senior advisors and other officials. The trip comes just days after Henry requested the immediate deployment of foreign troops to help with security. Gangs have blockaded a major fuel depot and protests against Henry have added to the problems.

"The delegation will assess how the U.S. government can continue to provide various forms of assistance and promote accountability for those responsible for criminal acts," the U.S. State Department said.

Since last year, the U.S. has provided Haiti with more than \$170 million in humanitarian assistance and another \$90 million to strengthen Haiti's National Police. But the department remains understaffed and has limited resources to fight gangs that have grown more powerful since President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated in July 2021. □

# Iodine pills in short supply after Finland updates guideline



A view of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station, in Enerhodar, Zaporizhzhia region, in territory under Russian military control, southeastern Ukraine, on May 1, 2022.

Associated Press

**HELSINKI (AP)** — Many Finnish pharmacies ran out of iodine tablets Wednesday, a day after the Nordic country's health ministry recommended that households buy a single dose in a case of a radiation emergency amid increasing fears of a nuclear event due to Russia's war in Ukraine.

"An accident at a nuclear power plant could release radioactive iodine into the environment, which could build up in the thyroid gland," the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health said Tuesday.

Pharmacies in many locations in Finland reported Wednesday they had run

out of iodine tablets as citizens rushed to purchase the medicine. Drug wholesale also said their were stockpiles emptied out.

The ministry said the iodine tablet recommendation is limited to those aged 3-40 because of the potential risks that radiation exposure poses to that age group. The ministry didn't mention Russia's war in Ukraine and didn't disclose where such nuclear accidents could potentially take place. It only said it had revised guidelines on the use of iodine tablets to match the latest iodine recommendations set by the World Health Organization.

However, Petteri Tiippana, director general of the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority of Finland, told the Finnish newspaper Ilta-Sanomat there was a link between the update and the situation in Ukraine.

"Yes, the war in Ukraine has influenced the updating of the instructions," Tiippana told the newspaper. "People must have up-to-date instructions should such a need arise."

In a case of a radiation emergency, sheltering indoors is the main way for people to protect themselves from hazardous radiation, the Finnish health ministry stressed. □



## By the commission evaluating the reopening of the border with Venezuela Government of Aruba advised not to reopen the border while still at the negotiating table

ORANJESTAD – During a public meeting in Parliament yesterday morning to discuss the reopening of the border with Venezuela, Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes gave an explanation of the policy of the commission in charge of this. Seeing as the crisis in Venezuela has escalated, the commission was installed and tasked to also provide advice to the government on this matter.

The Prime Minister indicated that the commission advised the government to keep the border closed, mainly because they are still at the deliberation table and also because of the risks associated with reopening. The government does this through at Landsbesluit (national decree) which is issued every three months or less. The last advice was to extend the closure for three more months until the end of the year, but if agreements are reached before then, the change can be made to reopen the border.

The commission consists of different stakeholders and consults with other stakeholders. It is directed by Bureau Rampenbestrijding Aruba (BRA – Disaster Management Office) and is carrying out conversations with Directie Buitenlandse Betrekkingen (DBB – Department of Foreign Relations), Veiligheidsdienst Aruba (VDA – Security Service), the Police, Dimas (Department of Immigration), DVG (Department of Public Health), Directie Sociale Zaken (Department of Social Affairs), DOW (Department of Public Works), Directie Luchtvaart (Department of Aviation), ATA (Aruba Tourism Authority), Immigration of Aruba, Ports Master of Aruba, Coast Guard and representatives from the ministry of Justice in charge of border enforcement in regards to the country package agreed with the Netherlands; also



included is the Department of Economic Affairs and a representative of the ministry of Economic Affairs to deal with the economic aspects of this issue.

On the government's request, the commission has been working for a while on this topic, which is distinguished in four different types of reopening. The first two are regarding maritime traffic and the other two are regarding air traffic.

Regarding marine traffic, the first that is being thought about is to open the route of the quay from Venezuela to Aruba in order to transport fruit, vegetables and certain materials. After

this, the next step would be to open for private yachts, something that is currently not allowed.

For the air traffic part, it is thought to open the main airport, Queen Beatrix with flights from Aruba to Venezuela and from Venezuela to Aruba. The next part would be to also open for private jets.

Currently, they are working on the maritime part. The government was written down a list of conditions with concrete agreements. Among other conditions are the documents that a ship's captain needs to have in their hands before leaving the port in Falcon

and before entering Aruba. "This is already something that works well, and is what we want this time as well", the Prime Minister said. Various stakeholders, among others the Police Department and Immigration, have identified the risks presented by reopening the border. Dimas also indicated that their main cause for concern when reopening the border is for asylum. This is a very delicate subject because it is about people and the suffering of people.

They are also worried about family visits that will begin, and many of these visitors do not leave. This is the trend that was observed in the past, the so-called

"overstayers". People remain in Aruba and enter the illegal circuit, which represents a problem for Aruba.

"I have every confidence that if both parties show the willingness to reach agreements we will come out. We live together with the situation in Venezuela which pains us, because many of us have family members who come from Venezuela. We have cultural and economic ties. Venezuela is a lot closer than other countries. But we cannot solve the problem of Venezuela. We are fighting to solve our own problems, but the problem of Venezuela and in Venezuela, they need to solve it themselves. Meanwhile we must ensure that Aruba recovers and is strong, so that we can stand on our own and help all those who live here. Whether you were born here or not, it is our responsibility to help all those who are here. Improve the quality of life for our people, create more jobs for them also, and ensure that there is high level education for all our children. And when we are standing strong, we can better help other countries", the Prime Minister said. □







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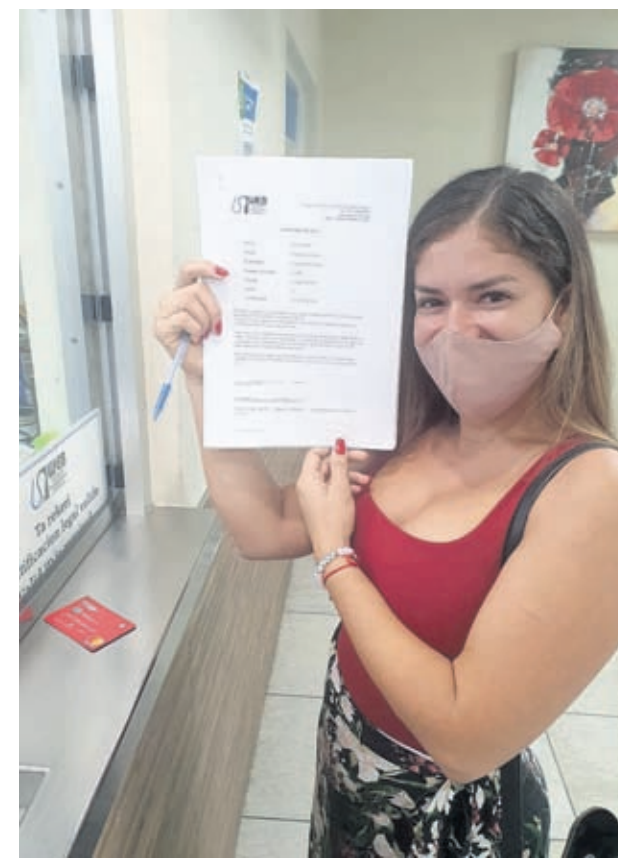
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## Over a decade in business, Aruba Living Today: Offering the so much needed human touch



**NOORD —** We are in 2022. It's been a wild ride with Covid-19 and we all are aiming for a change of routine. We simply want to "live" life again. "It is time for living your dream," as the quote says at Aruba Living Today's office. "We are ten plus years in business, and I am proud to say that all our clients stuck with us. We are no part of a big company, we keep it small, personal, and real. Because you are not a number, no sales target either and certainly your name is not commission. Our responsibility is to make your dream come true," says owner Randolph Arends.

### From human to human

If you have decided to buy a house or rent one for vacation in Aruba and you are looking for that match, the question now is how to click with a person that offers a personal touch? One who pays genuine attention and has sincere interest in what you want? This different approach to real estate is what sets Aruba Living Today apart, and the reason Randolph calls himself a property mediator instead of a real estate broker. "The personal

touch is essential to me. I am stepping aside of the image that real estate brokers are only in for the commission. This image does not fit me at all, I am in for my passion, and I can only do this from the heart."

### One stop shopping point

Services offered by Aruba Living Today are House and Land Sales, Rentals, Investments, Property Management, Vacation Rental, Mortgages, Insurances, Maintenance, Assist in Arrangements for Notary and Utilities, Guiding Bureaucracy Process and Assisting in Import of Furniture. Randolph and his business partner Berend Prenger are a fantastic, experienced duo, each of them specialists in the field. Berend is also a certified appraiser within the Dutch Kingdom meaning he does your appraisal report that is accepted by all banks and he delivers within three days. "This definitely speeds up the process of buying," Prenger adds.

### You are welcome to meet in person

Aruba Living Today houses in an authentic

Aruban house, welcoming you in a warm ambiance that emphasizes the philosophy of connecting. Candles, Buddha ornaments and a homey setting form the décor for you to sit and talk about your dream house or investment. "My goal was to do real estate in a different way when I established this company June 1st 2009. Not from the perspective of only selling, but to look for the perfect match between dream house and client. My philosophy is: it will only work when all involved are happy and connected by that personal touch."

Aruba Living Today caters for both local and foreign market divided into 40 % local buyers and 60 % foreign buyers. "Our customers come from Holland, Belgium, Norway, Germany, UK, Russia, Latin America, United States and Canada. We are widely covered and thus provable good with different cultures, also we speak four languages." Besides that, Aruba Living Today is open to every budget, they have listings for all category buyers. As a member of the Aruban Real Estate Association, they are listed also on the website www.arubalisting.com within a group of 20 of the most advanced realtors on the island. Aruba Living Today is featured on House Hunters, social media, Aruba Living Today and of course in Aruba Today's newspaper.

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## Kid\$BIZ Market III Kid\$BIZ Market III

**Oranjestad - The Department of Economic Affairs, Trade and Industry / IDEA, as part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Communication and Sustainable Development, together with their partners ActionCOACH, Santa Rosa, RBC Bank, and Aruba Bank, have organized an educational project for children between the ages of 9 and 13 years.**

This "Kid\$ BIZ Market III" project took place on October 3, 4, 5, and 7, 2022, at the Department of Economic Affairs, Trade, and Industry.

The children received entrepreneurial education and learned to recognize commercial opportunities. The children received a lot of information about business management and got the incentive to become future entrepreneurs.

They received information about products, customers, business plan, systems, service, promotions, and finances. They learned to generate money at an early age through commercial activities. They covered more topics during the first workshop Dave Martinus, Certified Business Coach of ActionCOACH Aruba, presented Get kids Started as an entrepreneur.

On the second day of the workshop Bringing the SDGs to the kids, The World we want, Vivian Loopstok-Geerman, head of the Sustainable Development Planning section of the De-

partment of Economic Affairs, presented all 17 SDGs for sustainable development for Aruba and the world.

The children had the opportunity to choose which of the SDGs was most important to them and why they chose these SDGs. It should stimulate future entrepreneurs and make them more aware of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

Ludwig Rasmijn of the Directorate of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Santa Rosa, presented the third workshop Making Agriculture Cool for Kids: Kids Agripreneur in the making. The children learned how to transfer plants from one pot to another and to take good care of them. They also learned how to plant and care for plants. The excitement was evident as they cultivate their plant.

In the fourth workshop, Creative Card Making Estella Brown-Thode taught the children how to make creative Christmas cards. In this workshop, the children had the freedom to use their creativity when making their Christmas cards.

Joanaila Geerman, Branch Manager of Personal Banking at RBC Royal Bank, and Nathaly Yoho-Lampe, Contact Center Manager at Aruba Bank NV, presented the fifth workshop, Financial Literacy: Earn, Spend wisely and Save.

The children learned how

to make money by growing produce in their fields, how to spend money wisely and what that means, what they consider basic needs, and how to save money.

During the sixth workshop, Creative Snacks Making, they learned to make healthy snacks. Clarina Geerman of the Department of Economic Affairs, Trade and Industry helped the children make six different snacks. It was indeed the most enjoyable workshop.

Judella Trim, Business Development Advisor at IDEA, presented the last workshop, Business Plan for Kids. She taught the children how to make a business plan. The children learned all about a business plan and had the opportunity to create their business plan using a questionnaire for the company they wanted to start.

On February 28, 2018, IDEA started the project "Kidpreneur\$ With Big Ideas", \p for the children who assist the nine out-of-school care programs 'Traimerdia'.

For children who do not attend Traimerdia, IDEA organized a Kid\$ BIZ Market, with a diversity of workshops and activities to teach and stimulate the children to become entrepreneurs in the future. This project started in 2018 during the fall holidays, while the second part took place in the summer holidays of 2019. During the first Kid\$BIZ Market, 32 children participated. In 2019, 31 children

attended the workshops. This year 28 children participated in the workshop. Parents are very interested in these workshops.

At the end of the project, the 28 participating children received a certificate from the Minister of Economic Affairs, Communication and Sustainable Development, Mr. Geoffrey Wever, and Mrs. Suhailah Rooseman-Maduro, Acting Director of the Directorate of Economic Affairs, Trade and Industry. IDEA is very grateful to its

partners and presenters for their contributions to the realization of this project.

During the four days of this project, the children demonstrated commercial talent in Aruba. IDEA wishes all children the best with creating their products or services, which they will present during the Kidpreneur\$ Bazaar in December 2022.

For more information about upcoming workshops and other activities, follow @Idea-Aruba or Facebook. □



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For Directions



## Aruba's underwater wonderland

**ORANJESTAD** - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we se-

lected the top spots for you.

### Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue

ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

### Antilla shipwreck



Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its port-side in Malmok bay, and the sunken word war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

### Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore

fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

### Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □





## Department of Older Persons Affairs organized its first informative talk

**ORANJESTAD – Monday morning, the 10th of October, in a completely full room at OPPA took place the first informative talk regarding the financial situation of our Older Persons, organized by the Department of Older Persons Affairs in connection with the Month for Older Persons.**

Present as panelists were Jonathan Upegui from Central Bureau of Statistics, CBS; Maritza Krozendijk, Relationship Manager and Financial Solutions from RBC Royal Bank; and Wilbert Marchena, policy officer for the Department of Social Affairs.

The moderator for this event was Edward Erasmus.

Different topics were discussed relating to our Older Persons, for example, composition of the household of Older Persons, average income for households with

at least one Older Person, and the expenses for at least one Older Person.

According to a press release from the government, it was a morning filled with information for those present as well as those attending online through the social media channels of the Department of Older Persons Affairs.

The Department of Older Persons Affairs thanked the panelists and moderator Edward Erasmus for a great presentation. He also thanked OPPA – the Organization of Public Pensioners of Aruba – for the use of their facilities.

The Department of Older Persons Affairs together with CBS will continue organizing informational talks in order to stimulate more participation during the month for Older Persons. □



## Minister of Finance attended IMF meeting with Caribbean Countries *On the challenge of insecurity caused by high prices of energy and food*

**Together with other Ministers of Finance in the Caribbean, Aruban minister of Finance, Xiomara Maduro attended a meeting on the challenge of insecurity caused by high prices of energy and food in the Caribbean.**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) emphasized that high cost of energy and food is causing inflation around the world. They warn that particularly countries in the Caribbean need to pay attention to



the challenges that they are all confronting.

Increase in the price of energy and food is a problem affecting all countries in the Caribbean, including Aruba. For this reason, IMF has put funds available to help the countries in the Carib-

bean, however, Aruba is not eligible for these funds.

This is because Aruba is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Regardless of this, it is important to listen to what other countries in the Caribbean are doing in order to mitigate the in-

flationary effect and also to ensure that food remains available and affordable in our country.

For Aruba, it is important to explore what options are available to bring security and relief to our people during these difficult times. □



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

## ACROSS

- 1 Phone downloads
- 5 Extreme fan
- 11 Painter Chagall
- 12 Like
- 13 Lab aide of film
- 14 Trowned
- 15 Explicitly precise
- 17 Thurman of "Kill Bill"
- 18 Fancy neckwear
- 22 Hoarse
- 24 Purloined
- 25 Clock numeral
- 26 D.C. baseballer
- 27 Scents
- 30 Social blunder
- 32 Basic belief
- 33 Running bird
- 34 Riot squad gear
- 38 Rainbow color
- 41 Ship of 1492
- 42 "Misery" director
- 43 Downfall
- 44 Relaxed
- 45 Poker payment

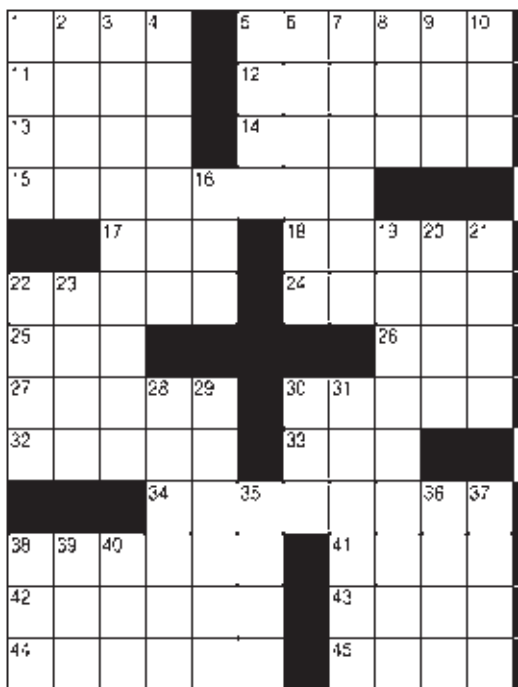
## DOWN

- 1 Surrounded by
- 2 News-paper part
- 3 Abundance
- 4 Be frugal
- 5 Niger neighbor
- 6 Japanese dogs
- 7 Most pleasant
- 8 Printing need
- 9 Brunched
- 10 Hake's cousin
- 16 Thumbs-down vote



Yesterday's answer

- |                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 19 Mix-up           | 30 Setting                   |
| 20 "Frozen" snowman | 31 Plummer of "Pulp Fiction" |
| 21 Head, to Henri   | 35 Ticked off                |
| 22 Mob revolt       | 36 Macramé unit              |
| 23 Staff member     | 37 Identical                 |
| 28 Saskatchewan's   | 38 Lyricist Gershwin         |
| 29 Play capital     | 39 Fishing tool              |
|                     | 40 Fade out                  |



10-13

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

10-13

CRYPTOQUOTE

SVC KIURSNFM NRM'S OVF'R  
XFNMX SF YUS GU; NS'R  
OVF NR XFNMX SF RSFL GU.

— EZM WEMQ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: PEOPLE DO NOT SEEM TO REALIZE THAT THEIR OPINION OF THE WORLD IS ALSO A CONFESSION OF CHARACTER. RALPH WALDO EMERSON

## TikTok going big on US e-commerce? Job listings offer clues

By HALELUYA HADERO  
AP Business Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — TikTok appears to be deepening its foray into e-commerce with plans to operate its own U.S. warehouses, the kind of packing and shipping facilities more associated with Amazon or Walmart than the social media platform best known for addictive short videos. In the past two weeks, TikTok has posted several job listings on LinkedIn looking for candidates to help it develop and grow its "Fulfillment by TikTok Shop" in the U.S. to accommodate sellers using the app. According to the listings, TikTok plans to provide warehousing, delivery and item return options to sellers. A company spokesperson declined to comment on TikTok's e-commerce plans in the U.S. But the U.S. job listings offer a window into a possible



The TikTok app logo is pictured in Tokyo, Sept. 28, 2020.

Associated Press

U.S. e-commerce expansion. In some listings, TikTok says it is looking for a candidate who can manage a free return program, plan how to move inventory from one warehouse or business to another, and develop its fulfillment service in the U.S. In another listing for a position in Seattle, the company refers to a global e-commerce team and a team member who

will be responsible for building a global warehousing network, signaling its plans could be much larger. "The e-commerce industry has seen tremendous growth in recent years and has become a hotly contested space amongst leading Internet companies, and its future growth cannot be underestimated," the company wrote in the job listings. □

## Crypto exchange Bittrex to pay \$24M for violating sanctions



An advertisement of Bitcoin, one of the cryptocurrencies, is displayed on a building in Hong Kong, on Nov. 18, 2021.

Associated Press

By KEN SWEET

AP Business Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Crypto exchange Bittrex was fined \$24 million by U.S. authorities on Tuesday for helping clients evade U.S. sanctions in places such as Syria, Iran and Crimea. It is the largest penalty ever levied against a crypto currency exchange by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, the agency said. The Treasury Department said that Bittrex allowed customers in Cuba, Syria, Iran, Sudan and the disputed region of Crimea to trade approximately \$263.5 million worth of digital currencies between 2014 and 2017. In its statement, the U.S. said that Bittrex should have been aware these customers were in sanctioned parts of the world due to their physical addresses as well as their IP addresses. □

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This photo provided by SpaceX photo shows Dennis Tito and his wife, Akiko, at the company's Starship rocket base near Boca Chica, Texas, on Monday, Oct. 10, 2022.

Associated Press

## World's 1st space tourist signs up for flight around moon

By **MARCIA DUNN**  
AP Aerospace Writer  
**CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.**

(AP) — The world's first space tourist wants to go back only this time, he's signed up for a spin around the moon aboard Elon Musk's Starship.

For Dennis Tito, 82, it's a chance to relive the joy of his trip to the International Space Station, now that he's retired with time on his hands. He isn't interested in hopping on a 10-minute flight to the edge of space or repeating what he did 21 years ago. "Been there, done that."

His weeklong moonshot its date to be determined and years in the future will bring him within 125 miles (200 kilometers) of the lunar far side. He'll have company: his wife, Akiko, and 10 others willing to shell out big bucks for the ride.

Tito won't say how much he's paying; his Russian station flight cost \$20 million. The couple recognize there's a lot of testing and development still ahead for Starship, a shiny, bullet-shaped behemoth that's yet to even attempt to reach space.

"We have to keep healthy for as many years as it's going to take for SpaceX to complete this vehicle," Tito said in an interview this week with The Associated Press. "I might be sitting in a rocking chair, not doing any good exercise, if it

wasn't for this mission."

Tito is actually the second billionaire to make a Starship reservation for a flight around the moon. Japanese fashion tycoon Yusaku Maezawa announced in 2018 he was buying an entire flight so he could take eight or so others with him, preferably artists. The two men both flew to the space station, from Kazakhstan atop Russian rockets, 20 years apart. Tito kicked off space tourism in 2001, becoming the first person to pay his own way to space and antagonizing NASA in the process. The U.S. space agency didn't want a sightseer hanging around while the station was being built. □

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# For Whoopi Goldberg, 'Till' release comes after long wait

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.  
AP Entertainment Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — When Whoopi Goldberg was invited to help produce an Emmett Till project, the actor thought she knew all about the Black teenager's 1955 kidnapping and lynching until she learned about the surprising elements behind the historic tragedy.

After Goldberg dove deep into Till's backstory, she and her production teammates Barbara Broccoli and Fred Zollo eagerly pitched movie ideas to several major studios. All eventually turned them down. It became discouraging at times, but after more than two decades of trying to get the project green lit, Hollywood finally took notice in their project following George Floyd's death in 2020.

Goldberg said that's when MGM's Orion Pictures stepped up to financially support the development of "Till," which opens in theaters Friday. "People kind of hopped up and said, 'Wait a minute, this is not okay with any of us,'" Goldberg recalled after the killing of Floyd, who died after a Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee into his neck for several minutes. She said Floyd's death struck a chord throughout



Whoopi Goldberg poses for a portrait to promote the film "Till," on Friday, Sept. 30, 2022, at the Park Lane Hotel in New York.

the U.S. the same way Till's lynching created public uproar 60-plus years ago. "Corporations started to pay attention," said Goldberg, who added that she's been connected to project long enough for her to go from being a "young woman with a kid" to now a grandmother. "Orion said 'Listen, we do want to tell this story. We want to help you tell this story. We've been waiting a long time.'" Goldberg said several di-

rectors were interviewed, but they were easily won over by Chinonye Chukwu who wanted to primarily focus her film on Mamie Till-Mobley, the mother of Emmett Till. The new movie follows the true and untold story of Till-Mobley, whose decision to publicize her 14-year-old son's brutal death for whistling at a white woman in Mississippi helped spark the civil rights movement.

"Without Mamie, the world

wouldn't know who Emmett Till was, and she is the heartbeat of the story," said the director, who called Till-Mobley a "warrior for justice" while she combatted racism, sexism and misogyny in wake of her son's killing.

Chukwu said she had unconditional support from Goldberg, who said the director was an obvious fit.

"(Goldberg) constantly communicated her unwavering belief in my artistry

and my abilities to be able to tell this story in a way that it needed to be told," said Chukwu, who directed the 2019 drama "Clemency" starring Alfre Woodard. "That kind of support made me feel so seen as an artist, as a human being, and as a Black woman. I will never forget that kind of support." Chukwu co-wrote the screenplay with Michael Reilly and Keith Beauchamp a filmmaker best known for his extensive research behind Till's abduction. His 2005 documentary "The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till" played a major role in the U.S. Department of Justice's decision to re-open the Till investigation. Beauchamp became friends with Till-Mobley, who was a mentor to him before she died in 2003. His work laid the foundation for Chukwu, who called Beauchamp a "treasure trove" of information and research in telling her cinematic story.

"It was incredible for myself to learn more about who she was as a person," she said. "The many aspects of her life with her girlfriends, with her man, with her church, at work, with her mother and a community of people who were so critical to her world. □"

Associated Press

# Blake Shelton, last of original 'The Voice' judges, to leave

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Blake Shelton, the last of the original panel of judges on "The Voice," will leave the megahit U.S. version of the singing competition show after next season.

"This show has changed my life in every way for the better and it will always feel like home to me," the country music star said in a statement Tuesday night. He said he had been "wrestling with this for a while."

The next season will be the NBC show's 23rd and Shelton's last. When it premiered in 2011, Shelton was joined in the big red chairs by Adam Levine, Christina Aguilera and CeeLo Green. Celebrity judges like

Pharrell, Shakira and Miley Cyrus rotated in and out for subsequent seasons, but Shelton had been the con-

stant (Levine had the second-longest tenure, with 16 seasons).

"I have to give a huge

shoutout to the singers the 'Voices,' who come on this stage season after season and amaze us with their talent," Shelton said, adding "a special thanks to those who chose me to be their coach."

The show is also where Shelton met his wife, Gwen Stefani. The pop star and "No Doubt" frontwoman joined the show in 2014 for its seventh season and the pair began dating the next year, after Shelton divorced Miranda Lambert and Stefani divorced Gavin Rossdale. Shelton and Stefani wed in July 2021.

"I am so proud of you and so blessed to have found u. your talent brings joy to the

hearts of so many people and I am so lucky to be part of ur life's journey," Stefani commented on Shelton's Instagram post announcing his departure.

"The Voice," hosted by Carson Daly, is in the midst of airing its 22nd season. Both Stefani and Shelton are serving as judges, alongside John Legend in his seventh season on the show and Camila Cabello. The Emmy-winning show also announced Tuesday night that Stefani, Legend and Cabello will vacate their seats next season, replaced by Kelly Clarkson another frequent judge and first-timers Niall Horan and Chance the Rapper. □



This image released by NBC shows Blake Shelton on the set of "The Voice."

Associated Press



# Alvarez 3-run HR caps Astros comeback, 8-7 win over Mariners

By The Associated Press

**HOUSTON (AP)** — Yordan Alvarez hit a game-ending, three-run homer with two outs in the ninth inning off Robbie Ray, wrecking Seattle's strategy of using a Cy Young Award winner in a rare relief role and vaulting the Houston Astros over the Mariners 8-7 Tuesday in their playoff opener.

Trailing all game after a poor start by Justin Verlander, the AL West champion Astros overtook rookie star Julio Rodríguez and the wild-card Mariners at the end to begin their best-of-five Division Series.

Houston was down 7-5 when rookie pinch-hitter David Hensley reached with one out in the ninth as Seattle closer Paul Sewald grazed his jersey with a pitch. Sewald struck out Jose Altuve before Jeremy Peña laced a single to center field to chase Sewald.

Ray, who had made only six relief appearances in his career, entered for a lefty versus lefty matchup with Alvarez, who sent the second pitch he faced deep into the seats in right field to set off a wild celebration.

The Mariners jumped on Verlander for six runs in just four innings to build a 6-2 lead early. Yuli Gurriel hit a



Houston Astros designated hitter Yordan Alvarez (44) celebrates after hitting a three-run, walk off home run against the Seattle Mariners during the ninth inning in Game 1 of an American League Division Series baseball game in Houston, Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2022.

solo homer in the Houston fourth before Eugenio Suarez's solo shot in the seventh extended Seattle's lead to 7-3.

A two-run homer by Alex Bregman off Andrés Muñoz cut the lead to 7-5 in the eighth inning to set up the dramatic finish.

## DODGERS 5, PADRES 3

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** Trea Turner homered and doubled as Los Angeles started fast and held off San Diego Padres in their NL Division Series opener.

Behind 17-game winner Julio Urías, the Dodgers raced to an early 5-0 lead and appeared to be on their way to another blowout of the Padres.

Los Angeles dominated in the regular season, owning a 14-5 advantage and outscoring San Diego 109-47. The 111-win Dodgers claimed the NL West and the Padres finished second, 22 games back.

With Sandy Koufax watching from the owners' box, Urías retired the first eight

batters he faced until Austin Nola doubled with two outs in the third.

Chris Martin, who had two saves this season, pitched the ninth for the save. Struggling closer Craig Kimbrel was left off the Dodgers' roster for this best-of-five matchup.

Game 2 is Wednesday night at Dodger Stadium before the series shifts south to San Diego.

## YANKEES 4, GUARDIANS 1

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Gerrit Cole cruised for most of the

night, Harrison Bader and Anthony Rizzo homered and New York beat Cleveland in the teams' AL Division Series opener.

The Yankees have won six straight postseason games against Cleveland, dating to a comeback from a 2-0 deficit in the 2017 Division Series.

Cole got the win in his first postseason game for the Yankees in the Bronx. He left after giving up one run and four hits in 6 1/3 innings with eight strikeouts. Jonathan Loáisiga, Wandy Peralta and Clay Holmes finished with two-hit relief to begin the best-of-five matchup.

Coming off a two-game sweep of Tampa Bay in the wild-card round, Cleveland struck out nine times, after having the fewest in the major leagues during the regular season.

Jose Trevino hit a go-ahead sacrifice fly in the fifth after Isiah Kiner-Falefa reached on a single into the right-field corner and wild-card series star Oscar Gonzalez allowed the ball to bounce throw his legs for a two-base error.

Rizzo chased Cal Quantrill with a drive into the right-field second desk in the sixth after Aaron Judge walked. □

# Ex-goalkeeper Hope Solo objects to U.S. Soccer equal pay deal



U.S. goalkeeper Hope Solo prepares to send the ball toward a teammate during an international friendly soccer match against Japan on June 2, 2016, in Commerce City, Colo.

Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Former goalkeeper Hope Solo objected to the equal pay lawsuit between her former teammates and the U.S. Soccer Federation, filing a notice in federal court.

Solo sued the USSF in August 2018 alleging violations of the federal Equal Pay Act and sex status discrimination.

While Solo's case has not progressed to trial, players led by Alex Morgan filed suit against the USSF the following year under the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Those players and the USSF reached a proposed \$24 million settlement this spring, and U.S. District Judge R. Gary Klausner in Los Angeles has scheduled a Dec. 5 hear-

ing for final approval.

As part of the settlement, the USSF signed collective bargaining agreements with the unions for the women's and men's national teams calling for equal pay.

Solo filed a notice of objection Tuesday and said she intends to attend the hearing either in person or through her lawyer.

"It's unfair to ask players to accept as 'fair, adequate and reasonable' a settlement in which the only thing that is described and explained with certainty is how much the lawyers will be paid," Solo said in a statement issued by her lawyer, A.J. de Bartolomeo. Solo cited \$7.9 million of the \$22 million settlement fund

as going to lawyers.

"Without knowing how much each player including me for our Title VII claims will be paid, or when we will get paid, it's impossible for players to determine whether or not the proposed settlement and whatever payment we each receive is fair, adequate or reasonable," she said.

The USSF had no immediate comment, spokesman Neil Buethe said.

"This historic resolution has been recognized as one of the greatest victories for equal pay," Molly Levinson, a spokeswoman for the group of suing players, said in a statement. "We look forward to the court's final approval hearing." □



# Fast forward: Shiffrin adds speed to post-Olympic ski season



United States' Mikaela Shiffrin smiles on the podium after taking second place in the alpine ski, women's World Cup slalom discipline, in Meribel, France, Saturday, March 19, 2022.

Associated Press

By **ERIC WILLEMSSEN**  
Associated Press

Mikaela Shiffrin is preparing for what could be her busiest Alpine ski racing season ever. It might become her fastest, too.

Coming off a season that included Olympic disappointment but also her fourth overall World Cup title, the American is eager to add more speed events to her schedule. The World Cup season,

which starts with a giant slalom in Austria on Oct. 22, includes 42 races, plus six events at the World Championships in France in February.

"I'm probably not going to do all of them. But I would like to focus a bit more on some of the super-G races and, for sure, all the slaloms and the GS," Shiffrin told The Associated Press in a recent video call.

Shiffrin has never raced more than 26 World Cup events in any of her 11 seasons on the circuit. That could change in 2022-23, with 11 slaloms, 10 giant slaloms and nine super-Gs on the cards.

And don't rule out a few downhill starts, too, even though she will sit out the new Zermatt-Cervinia

speed season opener early November.

"Downhill takes more time, more days, more effort, so then it's less training for other events. We pick and choose which downhill is possible," said Shiffrin, adding it "brings me a lot of joy, to ski super-G, as long as my slalom and GS feel like they are on point, then we try that out."

Going into the new season also draws a line under the previous one, which was overshadowed by Shiffrin's surprising lack of medals at the Beijing Games, where she failed to finish any of the tech races and placed ninth in super-G and 18th in downhill.

"The biggest takeaway from the Olympics is ... those races didn't take

away anything from anything else that happened in my career," Shiffrin said. "It's not that I don't know (what went wrong), it's that I could tell you a list of things that went wrong in the months leading up to going to Beijing, and then in Beijing as well. I still might have been able to succeed, but I didn't," she added.

"I think in any universe, in a parallel realm, if I were to be able to go back, it would probably happen that way again. It's just something that needed to happen in my career." Starting preparations for the new season early, Shiffrin trained some downhill in the springtime, before focusing on super-G, GS and slalom during a camp in Chile in September.

"It was a really productive camp and I feel in a good place, physically and with my skiing. I'm anxious to get really started and put the training we have done and the work we have done to the test," she said. Shiffrin starts the season on 74 World Cup wins, just eight short of Lindsey Vonn's women's record and 12 shy of Ingemar Stenmark's overall mark. Shiffrin's tally includes seven speed victories — four in super-G, three in downhill, including in the final speed race of last season that helped her clinch the overall title.

Her reinforced speed ambitions get impetus from her Austria-based equipment supplier.

After the departure of her longterm ski technician Johann Strobl in the off-season, Atomic has provided her with two successors: Austrians Robert Bürgler and Lukas Rottinger, with the latter handling Shiffrin's speed ski setup.

While Bürgler previously worked with 2005 overall champion Benjamin Raich and, more recently, Austrian slalom specialists Marco Schwarz and Manuel Feller, Rottinger prepared equipment for Marcel Hirscher in the Austrian great's final season before retiring in 2019. □

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